**Vincent Matthews SGFA Biography**

Vincent’s art journey started at a very young age and due to his severe deafness, initially went to school part time, just to paint and draw. Later, when he was 9, a teacher showed his parents his big Mickey Mouse painting on the classroom wall, which is when they realised that that he was good at art. He was encouraged to learn oil painting at 14 by his father and a keen amateur artist taught him in his father’s workshop, completing his first commission at 16. A year later, he went to Maidstone College of Art, to study on their Foundation course, before being persuaded by his father to study interior design for the next 3 years at Croydon School of Art & Design. After many years of successfully working in the field of interior architecture, the commissioned painting was returned. His work colleagues asked to see the picture and they were impressed, encouraging him to recommence painting. He then did various courses at City Lit from 2003 to 2005, before going onto study on their life changing 2-year contemporary fine art course. When he completed it, Vincent went self-employed to devote more time for his fine art passion.

Drawing has always featured heavily in his work, in his etchings and engravings, but he was still oil painting up until 2016. Through exhibiting with the Pure Arts Group, he was made aware of The SGFA (the drawing society) and after taking part in their Draw 11 in 2011, he was elected an associate member the following year, becoming a full member in 2015, a council member in 2016 and their curator in 2019.

Vincent’s work was predominantly drawing based, sketching from life, and using this information for his mostly black and white finished pictures. His direction went through a big transformation during the Covid lockdown periods, with more colour creeping into his work (especially in his 110 daily sketches) and during the Pure Arts Group “making art” module, rediscovered his passion for oil painting. He largely owes his new direction to Lesley Samms, who suggested with his background that he try a painting from imagination. The first one was the “House in The Woods”, using a mixture of memory and a very old sketch inspiration. He loved it and found it so freeing, so was encouraged to do more and now he is working on producing a series. It reminded him of his teenage years, when he was often left to his own devices in the art classes at school and would draw buildings with people from out of his head. It was like finding himself again and a natural path for him to explore.

Over time, his pictures have become more and more surreal. He loves the dream like direction, with random out of scale objects, leaving the viewer to decide the story for themselves. It goes beyond depicting what is just in front of him now. The Dadaist principle of beauty in everyday objects, with Salvador Dali’s lobster telephone, Magritte’s apple on face or steam train coming out of a fireplace painting, Giorgio De Chirico’s use of architecture and shadows in his surreal paintings all inspire him. He loves the whole creative process, which includes figurative subjects that help to give some believability to the paintings. This new approach to his artwork allows his unconscious mind to fully express itself, revealing scenes that to the viewer may appear illogical, unexpected, or even bizarre, but to him feels completely right!